

**SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR MANAGING INFORMATION FOR A  
PLURALITY OF COMPUTER SYSTEMS IN A DISTRIBUTED NETWORK****ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

5           A system for managing computers in a distributed computer network includes  
a collection agent for each computer being monitored, a local database coupled to  
each collection agent, one or more condensing agents coupled to the databases, and at  
least one console module. The condensing agent generates an index table from a  
source database and sends it upstream to the next level up in the hierarchy of  
10   databases. Other condensing agents may in turn act on this index table and send it up  
to a still further level, until a top-level master node has an index table reflecting the  
entire network. The console can use the index table to identify what databases  
contain needed data, and then make only selective connections to databases to answer  
queries, avoiding connections to all the local databases. The condensing agent also  
15   produces summarized data and sends it upstream as well, to be used by the console.  
Efficiency is improved over conventional systems. Use of the index method and the  
summary method can be transparent to (hid from) the user of the console, or may be  
made visible, with selection options.

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